

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

JUN 25 1987

Site # PE#11



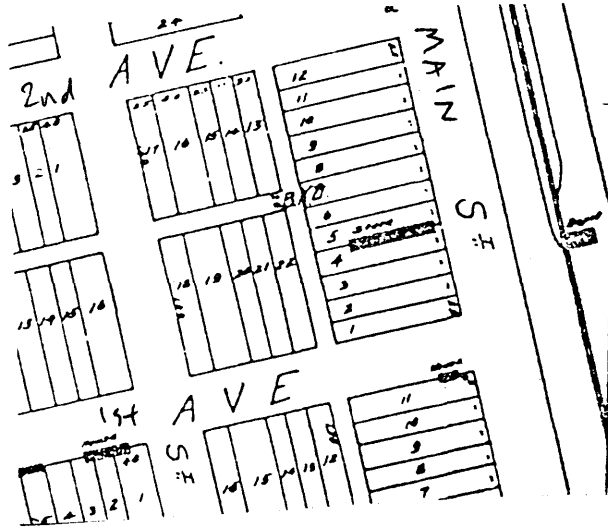
Legal Description: Original Town, Block 2, Lots 4-5

Address: 8 N. Main St., Lodge Grass, MT

Ownership: Name: Harold and Michael Nanto

private address: 2498 Stephanie Pl., Billings, MT 59102

Roll # 3 Frame # 6



Location map or building plan with arrow north. N ↑

Historic Name: George Pease's Second Store

Common Name: Benbrook's store

Date of Construction: circa 1908 estimated documented
N/A

Architect: _____

Builder: George Pease

Original Owner: George Pease

Original Use: Store and Indian trading post

Present Use: Abandoned

RESEARCH SOURCES: Note all records consulted to determine dates of construction, original owners, builders, uses, etc.

Title Search: _____ Tax Records: yes

Bldg. Permit: _____ Census Records: yes

Sewer/Water: _____ Sanborn Maps: _____

Directories: yes Newspapers: yes

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

(see footnotes to Historical Information)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Describe present appearance of structure/site, then contrast and compare that with its original appearance, noting additions, alterations, and changes in materials. Discuss significant architectural features.

A single story rectangular former commercial structure, built of milled lumber. It has a false front on the east side, facing Main Street, of horizontal planking. The large central door is boarded up as are the two windows on either side of it. There is an addition on the south, also false fronted on the east elevation, with a central door facing Main. This addition extends further east than the main building. On the north side is a wood frame addition with a shed roof.

Early photographs of this structure indicate that it originally had a wooden covered porch on the east facade. The addition to the south was then flush with the rest of the building.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION: Describe the persons, important events, and/or historical patterns associated with the structure/site and surrounding area.

The man who originally built this structure, George H. Pease, was the son of Fellows D. Pease, the first civilian agent to the Crow Indians, appointed in 1871 to serve at the first agency, on Mission Creek and the Yellowstone River, near where the modern town of Livingston now stands.¹ In 1900 George Pease was listed on the federal census as living at Crow Agency, Montana, as part of the "Indian Population." At that time he was 33 years old, and head of a household with a wife and seven children. His father is given as white, born in Pennsylvania, while his mother is given as a Crow Indian born in Montana. George's occupation is given as a "Merchant."² At this time it is known that George's store was in Lodge Grass, because on June 9, 1900 he had been appointed postmaster for this fledgling community.³ George sold this store, which was located next to Lodge Grass Creek south of the present-day town of Lodge Grass, to A.M. Stevenson in 1902.⁴ He then relocated his family on a ranch at Rotten Grass Creek and George operated a trading post at Parkman, Wyoming for a short time. Around 1908 George Pease moved back to Lodge Grass and opened a new store across from the railroad depot. As his daughter recalled, "My dad handled everything from cracker jacks to wagons and harness."⁵ (cont.)

Footnote Sources:

¹Thomas B. Marquis, ed., Memoirs of a White Crow Indian (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974).

²U.S. Department of Commerce, Federal Population Census Schedules, 1900, Custer County, Montana, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver

INTEGRITY: Assess the degree to which the structure/site, and surrounding area accurately convey the historical associations of the property. (c)

The site has great integrity of location. However, it is in rather poor condition. The original porch is gone. The addition to the south is now pushed eastward. On the north is the shed addition. However, the building still closely resembles what it once was, and conveys the feeling for its historical associations. It was once the focus of commercial activity in Lodge Grass. It is now abandoned and almost forgotten.

HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE: Justify how the persons, important events, or historical patterns associated with structure/site lend the property significance and/or describe the ways in which the structure embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular period, building type, or style.

There is little doubt this is one of the most important historical structures in the town of Lodge Grass. It was built by the founder of the community, George Pease. Pease was Lodge Grass' first postmaster and merchant. His store was the center of the commercial district, and its construction near the railroad depot led to a shift of the town, from Lodge Grass Creek northward. This store, and the railroad depot, are the only structures illustrated on the first plat of the original town, done in 1910, which still stand. The site is associated with important events in the history of Lodge Grass and with the lives of people who made an important contribution to the town. For years after Pease sold the store it was managed by William Benbrooks, another prominent merchant.

FORM PREPARED BY:

Name: P. Friedman, Powers Elevation
Address: P.O. Box 2612, Denver, CO 80201

Date:

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

Acreage: Less than one acre
USGS Quad: Lodge Grass, 7.5', 1967

ITEMS

13 | 314740 | 5020540

MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY
CONTINUATION PAGE

PE#11-Old Pease and Benbrook's Store
Original Town, Block 2, Lots 4-5
Lodge Grass, MT

HISTORICAL INFORMATION (Cont.):

An early photograph, supposedly dated to 1908, illustrates the store, with George Pease sitting on the porch.⁶ The first plat of the original town of Lodge Grass, dated 1910, clearly illustrates the store at its present location. George Pease is listed on the 1910 federal census living on the Crow Indian Reservation and working as a "Storekeeper and Indian Trader."⁸ In May, 1913 Pease sold this store to John Hinman. In the 1916 Lodge Grass Directory Hinman is shown to own a general store while George Pease is listed operating a livery.¹⁰ The county tax records for 1915 indicate that John Hinman owned lots 4-6, Block 2, Original Town, in Lodge Grass, with \$500.00 worth of improvements. W.T. Benbrooks purchased this property in 1921.¹¹ Benbrooks was a merchant from Hardin. In 1945 this store was acquired by C.G. Clanin.¹² It remained in the ownership of the Clanin family through 1965.

FOOTNOTE SOURCES (Cont.):

(Microfilm).

³U.S. Postal Service, Records of Appointments of Postmasters, 1833-1971, Montana, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver. (Microfilm).

⁴Eloise Pease, et al., Grass, Tipis, and Black Gold (Hardin: Adrienne Johnson, 1976), p. 26.

⁵Helen Pease Wolf, in Bicentennial Committee of the Big Horn Historical Society, eds., Lookin' Back, Big Horn County (Hardin: Big Horn County Historical Society, 1976), p. 274.

⁶Pease, et al., Grass, Tipis, and Black Gold, p. 28.

⁷"Map of Lodge Grass Montana," surveyed 1910, County Clerk's Office, Big Horn County Courthouse, Hardin, Montana.

⁸U.S. Department of Commerce, Federal Population Census Schedules, 1910, Rosebud County, Montana, Federal Archives and Records Center, Denver. (Microfilm).

⁹Hardin Tribune, 2 May 1913.

¹⁰R.L. Polk, Directory of Billings and Red Lodge, Yellowstone, Carbon, Stillwater, and Big Horn Counties (Helena: R.L. Polk & Co., 1916), pp. 377-378.

¹¹"Town Ownership Books," Assessor's Office, Big Horn County Courthouse, Hardin, Montana.

¹²Ibid.